



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee

March 11, 2013 Public Hearing

Comments Submitted by Pat Reilly, Connecticut League of Women Voters, Ethics Specialist

Comments On:

S.B. 900 AAC REVISIONS TO THE STATE CODES OF ETHICS

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I am Pat Reilly, Ethics Specialist for the League of Women Voters of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments for S.B. 900 AAC REVISIONS TO THE STATE CODES OF ETHICS.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut, a statewide organization with over 1600 members, believes that the public should have confidence in the integrity of its government. Government officials and employees should be held accountable for carrying out their duties in both an effective and ethically responsible manner. To accomplish these ends, the League supports efforts to reform, strengthen and clarify Connecticut's Codes of Ethics for Public Officials, as well as measures to strengthen the functioning and governance of the Office of State Ethics (OSE).

In general the League supports Senate Bill 900. We highlight our support for the following provisions.

- The bill expands the pool of qualified candidates for the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board (CEAB) to include the offices of justice of the peace or notary public and staggers terms to ensure a quorum.
- Under S.B.900, the OSE can recover the amount of any financial benefit received by a state contractor because of violations found in C.G.S Section 1-101nn, violations such as an intentional attempt to circumvent state competitive bidding. A comprehensive code of ethics applicable to state contractors is crucial to the transparent, efficient, cost effective operation of the state of Connecticut.
- The bill narrows the prohibition on gifts to the state by permitting participation of public officials and state employees at an event that facilitates state or quasi-public agency action or functions. We support the change because we share the concern of some agencies that the current prohibition on participation by officials and state employees limits cost-effective opportunities for state agencies to train and improve the skills of their workforces. For this provision to be successful, the qualification that such participation must facilitate state action or functions must be promulgated, adhered to, and enforced.
- S.B. 900 gives the OSE the authority to interpret Parts III and IV of chapter 10 of the general statutes. Part III Lobbying: Miscellaneous Provisions. Part IV Ethical Considerations Concerning Bidding and State Contracts.

Thank you for your consideration.

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